

# Imperfect Indicative Active

## The Imperfect Indicative Active Endings:

Singular

**1st person:** - ν

**2nd person:** - ς

**3rd person:** -

Plural

**1st person:** - μεν

**2nd person:** - τε

**3rd person:** - ν or σιν

The imperfect is a past tense that denotes continuous or repeated action in the past. Unlike the aorist when expressing past tense, which describes a simple, completed action, the imperfect emphasizes the ongoing, habitual, or iterative nature of the action. This tense is used to describe actions that were in progress or repeated over a period of time in the past, up to the point of writing, often without a clear indication of when they were completed.

## Form and Structure:

- The imperfect is constructed by taking the verb stem (λου) and adding an augment (usually ἐ-) to the beginning of the verb to indicate past time, followed by specific tense endings. ἐ - λού - ον ("I was washing")
- **Syllabic augment** (ἐ-): used with verbs beginning with consonants.
- **Temporal augment** (lengthening of the initial vowel): used with verbs that start with vowels.
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## Endings in the Imperfect Tense:

1st person singular: -ον (ἐ- + stem + ο + ν → "I was doing")

2nd person singular: -ες (ἐ- + stem + ε + ς → "You were doing")

3rd person singular: -ε(ν) (ἐ- + stem + ε + - → "He/She/It was doing")

1st person plural: -ομεν (ἐ- + stem + ο + μεν → "We were doing")

2nd person plural: -ετε (ἐ- + stem + ε + τε → "You (plural) were doing")

3rd person plural: -ον (ἐ- + stem + ο + ν or σιν → "They were doing")

## Usage of the Imperfect Tense:

- **Narrative:** Often used in narrative passages to set the scene or describe background actions in progress when another action occurs.
- **Iterative or Habitual Action:** Expresses actions that were repeated habitually in the past. For instance, "he used to teach" or "they were visiting."
- **Inceptive:** Sometimes used to highlight the **beginning** of a continuous action. For example, it can emphasize the start of an ongoing action: "he began to speak."